



## ***AOT in Action***

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

### **A Message from Director Sherry Henry:**

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Good afternoon,

Good news for Arizona's statewide lodging performance! According to Smith Travel Research latest performance data, statewide lodging occupancy was up 9.3 percent for December, rounding out the 2010 calendar year at a 55.7 percent occupancy rate. That's up 5.7 percent from 2009! Another interesting tidbit is that statewide Demand is up 8 percent, over 2009. Even though Arizona's Average Daily Rate (ADR) has shown improvement, Arizona is still -3 percent down over 2009. However, with all the incredible activities happening throughout the state, we're off to a great start!

For more details, be sure to check out the updated research information in the **AOT News** section below!

Also, AOT has launched our first user-generated video contest on Facebook! For information, please read the **AOT News** section below.

Have a great week.

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### **AOT News**

#### **AOT is on the Road Again!**

The Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) will be in Apache Junction, **Wednesday, January 26** with its outreach program, **AOT on the Road!**

Through this informative program, AOT staff members will be traveling throughout the state hosting outreach workshop sessions to provide information on what our agency has to offer your community, such as technical assistance, marketing techniques, trade & media partnerships and research information. Through these useful sessions you'll be able to meet

one-on-one with AOT staff to discuss tourism promotion and development, as well as to share your region's successes with us.

The workshop information is below. Future dates and locations will be announced soon.

**Wednesday, January 26**

**[Multi-Generational Center](#)**

1035 North Idaho Road  
Apache Junction, AZ 85119

The workshop will be held from 1:00–5:00 p.m., with registration from 12:30–1:00 p.m.

We hope you take advantage of this great opportunity to participate with our agency and meet the AOT team!

To R.S.V.P., please submit your name, the name of your organization and your contact information to [ATURSV@azot.gov](mailto:ATURSV@azot.gov).

**AZ Spring Training Day Video Contest**

AOT has launched its first ever user-generated video contest on Facebook! AOT has asked its 32,000+ Facebook fans to provide a two minute or less video that describes their ideal Arizona Spring Training day. Users can submit creative descriptions of which of the 15 Cactus League teams they would like to see play, where they would eat, and how else they would enjoy the gorgeous spring weather in Arizona!

AOT will choose five of the most creative, thoughtful and original videos to be voted on by fans of the Arizona Tourism page on Facebook. The finalist that receives the most votes will win:

- 4 tickets to a Cactus League Spring Training game at Camelback Ranch (home of the Chicago White Sox and the Los Angeles Dodgers)
- 3 night stay for 4 at the Wigwam Golf Resort & Spa
- 2 rounds of championship golf at the Wigwam Golf Resort & Spa
- Daily access to the Elizabeth Arden Red Door Spa
- A family golf clinic
- Dinner for 4 at Litchfield's at the Wigwam Resort & Spa
- Dinner for 4 at Haus Murphy's
- Tours of the Ceretta Candy Company, The Bead Museum and the University of Phoenix Stadium

Videos can be submitted through **Friday, February 4, 2011** on the “contests” tab at <http://www.facebook.com/arizonatravel>

### **New Update to AOT’s Research Web site!**

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT’s business-to-business Web site [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov).

- [National, Regional, Arizona Lodging December & Year-End 2010](#)
- [National, Regional, Arizona Lodging 4th Quarter 2010](#)
- [County Lodging December & Year-End 2010](#)
- [County Lodging 4th Quarter 2010](#)
- [National Park Visitation October 2010](#)
- [Airport Passenger Traffic November 2010](#)
- [Airport Passenger Traffic October 2010](#)

For additional information or questions, please contact Melissa Elkins, Research Manager, at 602-364-3716 or via e-mail at [melkins@azot.gov](mailto:melkins@azot.gov).

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### **Upcoming Events & Activities**

#### **[Rivers, Rocks & Rides Press Trip](#)**

Date: February 6 – 12

Location: Lake Havasu City, Parker, Yuma and Tempe, AZ

#### **[Go West Summit](#)**

Date: February 7 – 10

Location: Boise, ID

#### **[Contrasts of Arizona Press Trip](#)**

Date: February 12 – 19

Location: Mesa, Tucson and Tombstone, AZ

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### **Arizona Centennial News**

#### **Join us as We Kick-Off Arizona’s Centennial Events!**

February will mark the beginning of Arizona’s official Centennial countdown! Community events will be happening across the state during the next year. Each event has its own unique and diverse appeal; showcasing Arizona’s beautiful and rich past, present and future.

Additionally, the Arizona Centennial Commission has a few events in the works. If you are wondering where the Centennial “mascot” is, you can find the Arizona Centennial Copper Chopper at the Barrett Jackson Collector Car event at the Westworld of Scottsdale. It will also be

making an appearance at the Waste Management Phoenix Open at the TPC, happening January 31 – February 6.

The Centennial Commission is also hosting the **Countdown to the Centennial** February 14, 2011! Arizona's 99th Statehood Day will be the official kick-off to Arizona's Centennial events. From 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. an expo will take place on the Senate Lawn at the Arizona State Capitol and will showcase the historic, yearlong signature events and projects, legacy projects and official Centennial events that will occur throughout the year.

Save the date for this once-in-a-lifetime Valentine's Day capitol celebration!

Here are some other events that are happening in February you should mark on your calendar!

- February 9th : Arizona Centennial Taste of Arizona
- February 11th-13th : Wickenburg Gold Rush Days
- February 11th: Historymakers Gala
- February 17th-27th: Scottsdale Arabian Horeshow
- February 19th-27th : La Fiesta De Los Vaqueros

For more information on these events visit: <http://www.arizona100.org/events-projects>.

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## Industry News

### Old but not out: courting the 50+ market

There's a lot of talk about the aging of America as record numbers reach the traditional retirement age of 65. But a previously neglected segment is the over-50 traveler who no longer is content with cruise ship croquet and upscale guided tours.

There are no more limits on travel for the over 50's, writes Deborah Thiele, Director of Africa Expedition Support, a safari company based in East Africa.

The over 50's are an affluent market, particularly in the tour sector. They have disposable income, time to travel, and a desire to experience the real culture in travel. But more importantly, perhaps, the over 50's want more adventure. But the boom in cruise travel is also a reflection of this new market. This could also be a boon to around-the-world cruise operators.

"They are more aware, active, Internet savvy and environmentally conscious and are also adventurous (soft, medium and hard) and willing to learn and experience new things unlike the senior citizens of the past," said Tourist Intelligence's Poon.

As more over 50's are computer literate, they are seeking out options on their own over the internet and are confident booking their own travel.

Wandering around in motor homes will escalate in popularity as the older tourists become even more prominent.

"Twenty years ago people retiring early would have bought a villa in Spain; now they are buying motorhomes instead," said Dan Yates, managing director of Pitchup, an online guide to campsites and parks.

Campsites with spas and other luxury amenities are increasingly luring the older travelers.

Where has this shift come from and why has it taken so long?

In the tour market, the 20 to 30-year-old segment has traditionally been seen as the market with expendable income and time to travel. But that group is working harder than ever and has become less lucrative for the adventure and tour travel market, in particular.

"We are seeing fitter and more active over 50's who have paid off the mortgage, kids have moved out of home; coupled with the age of internet and cable television making the global village more attractive and accessible," Thiele said.

Also, more over 50's are deciding there is more to retirement than gardening and playing bridge.

"It certainly has taken a very long time for the adventure travel market to recognize and value the over 50's as prospective consumers of the global adventure travel. But as more and more recognize this market, options are set to increase in the future" Thiele said. (*Travel Mole, January 19*)

### **U.S. Cost for International Visa Woes: \$2.4 billion**

Convention officials have long wondered exactly how much the difficulty for international visitors to get a visa into the US costs for world meetings. The answer: a staggering US\$2.4 billion. The study conducted by Oxford Economics got responses from 47 US-based events and the CEIR Exhibition Industry Census.

"The CEIR study is significant because it quantifies the amount of revenue lost by people being denied a visa or people not even applying because of the difficulties and complexities with the process," said Daniel McKinnon, executive vp, Meese Frankfurt USA.

The study showed the loss of 116,000 would-be participants or 2.5 percent of potential international attendees. Those delegates would have spent US \$295 million and generated \$750 million in state and federal taxes.

Said Steven Hacker, president of the International Association of Exhibitions and Events: "We are not going to keep pace as a nation with the economic growth that is now taking place in areas like China, India and South America unless we reduce the barriers that keep legitimate business travelers out of the United States." (*Travel Mole, January 19*)

### **STR: Luxury Segment Tops 2010 Performance**

The luxury segment reported the largest increases in all three key performance metrics in 2010, according to data compiled by STR. The segment's occupancy rose 7.8% to 66.2%, average daily rate was up 2.1% to US\$249.65, and RevPAR increased 10.1% to US\$165.29. Overall, the U.S.

hotel industry's occupancy increased 5.7% to 57.6%, ADR ended the year virtually flat with a 0.1% decrease to US\$98.08, and revenue per available room was up 5.5% to US\$56.47.

"2010 will be known as the year of demand recovery," said Mark Lomanno, STR's CEO. "For most industry markets and segments, the number of people purchasing hotel rooms approached and in some cases exceeded pre-recession levels. However, for myriad reasons including but not limited to historically low occupancies, late booking patterns and the sluggish return of group business, room rate acceleration did not follow the influx of guests. We look to see this change dramatically in 2011, especially during the second half of the year."

Among the chain-scale segments, the economy segment experienced the largest ADR decrease, falling 3.1% to US\$49.38. Three segments, other than the luxury segment, reported RevPAR increases of more than 5%: the upper-upscale segment (+5.7% to US\$96.19); the upscale segment (+5.7% to US\$69.97); and the independent segment (+5.2% to US\$52.46).

Among the top 25 markets, Detroit, Michigan, experienced the largest occupancy increase, rising 14.2% to 54.3%. Houston, Texas, ended the year virtually flat with a 0.3% occupancy decrease to 55.1%, reporting the only decrease among the top markets.

New York, New York, achieved the only ADR increase of more than 5%, rising 7.5% to US\$232.29. Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida, reported the largest ADR decrease, falling 7.2% to US\$91.43, followed by Detroit with a 5.2% decrease to US\$74.49.

Five top markets experienced double-digit RevPAR increases for the year: New Orleans (+14.7% to US\$74.92); Boston, Massachusetts (+13.0% to US\$97.19); New York (+12.9% to US\$187.93); Miami-Hialeah, Florida (+10.9% to US\$101.19); and Denver, Colorado (+10.5% to US\$59.25). Houston (-4.2% to US\$48.78) and Tampa-St. Petersburg (-1.5% to US\$50.56) experienced the only RevPAR decreases for the year.

During December 2010, the industry's occupancy increased 5.4% to end the month at 46.0%. ADR was up 1.9% to finish the month at US\$96.22. RevPAR for the month rose 7.4% to finish at US\$44.23. (*HotelNewsNow.com, January 21*)

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### **Calendar of Events**

Visit [www.ArizonaGuide.com](http://www.ArizonaGuide.com) to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

### **Connect with the Arizona Office of Tourism!**

Become a fan on Facebook! <http://www.facebook.com/arizonatravel>

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